17

BAKEMONOGATARI

OH!GREAT

Original Story:

NISIOISIN

Original Character
Design: VOFAN

PILOT
カタヅケだ
オレは…
よし勝って強いなる
ヒソヒソ
ヒソヒソ
ヒソヒソ

BAKEMONOGATARI

OH!GREAT

ORIGINAL STORY:

NISIOISIN

ORIGINAL CHARACTER
DESIGN: VOFAN

17

MAIN CHARACTERS

Koyomi Araragi

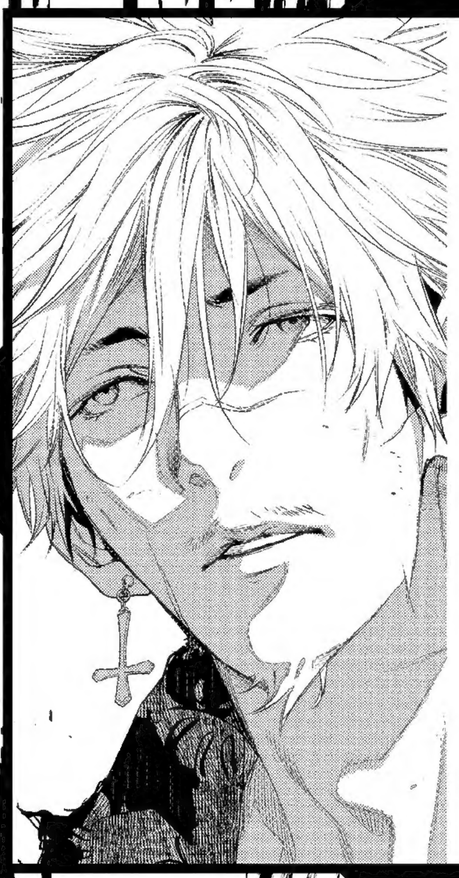
A boy and a "mockery of a vampire."
He feels that he owes his life to Hanekawa to the point that he wants to die for her.

Tsubasa Hanekawa

Koyomi's classmate, and an honor student that few honors could sufficiently describe.
She grew up under harrowing circumstances and a complex family situation.

Black Hanekawa

The aberration known as an Afflicting Cat, or *sawarineko*, which has manifested in Hanekawa.

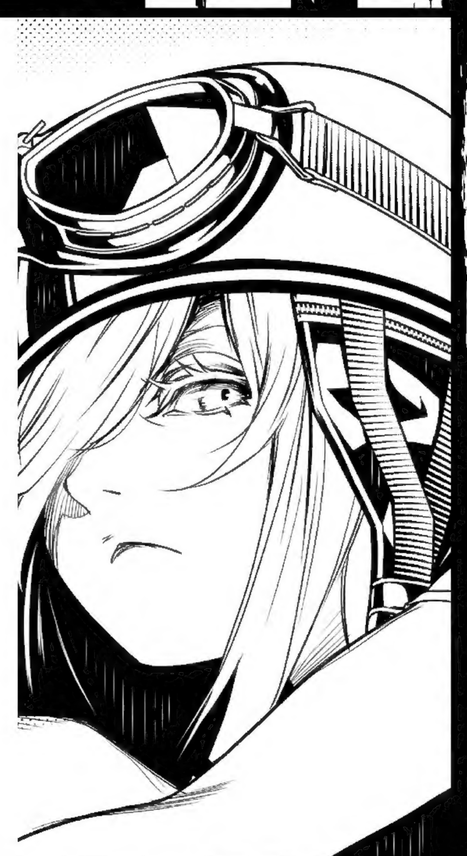


Mèmè Oshino

A self-described expert on aberrations.
Now temporarily based out of the town of Naoetsu, he often agrees to speak with Koyomi about his problems.

Shinobu Oshino

Once called the "king of aberrations," she is now a husk of a vampire.
Her existence is bound by her new name.



THE STORY SO FAR

Tuesday, June 13. The aberration known as the Afflicting Cat has suddenly appeared in front of Koyomi Araragi under the name of Black Hanekawa. An issue thought to have been solved during Golden Week has now re-appeared—the deep and dark feelings secretly held by Tsubasa Hanekawa. Koyomi recalls the wild Golden Week he spent trying to save Hanekawa by freeing her from this burden. Now, those feelings have resurfaced in an even stronger and tougher form, but what will Koyomi do to save her this time...?

BOOK DESIGN VEIA

Chapter 5

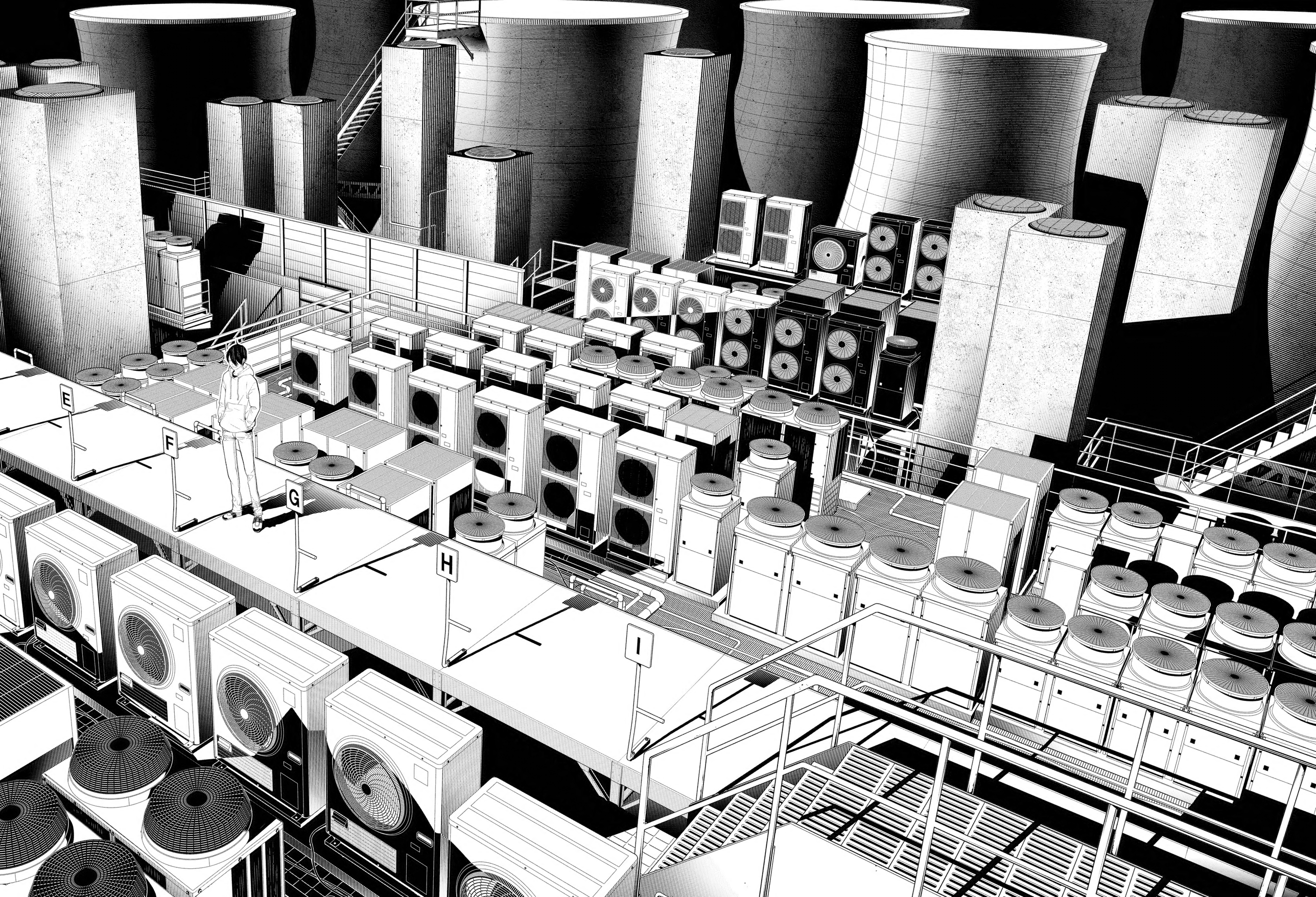
Tsubasa Cat

The choice of our *meeting spot*...

...really doesn't matter.

Every-thing I need to do is already done.

All that's left now—is to wait.


E
F
G
H
I

30 minutes earlier.

Araragi. Before you fight this cat,

I want to tell you something interesting I heard.

I thought they would've been...in a lot worse shape.

!!

Oh, huh.

In any case... I went to hear a bit of what those two had to say.

NAOETSU GENERAL HOSPITAL

It's about Missy Class Presi-dent's parents.

They're actually out of the hospital already.

PARKING AVAILABLE

NAOETSU GENERAL HOSPITAL Parking Information

Parking Fees

Patients (including attendants)

3+ hours: 100 yen / 30 minutes

Visitors and others going to the hospital

Enter between 6:30-18:30 on weekdays

+ hours: 100 yen / 30 minutes

Enter on weekdays at other times / Saturdays, Sundays, and Holidays

+ hours: 100 yen / 30 minutes

KRAK

About when... *that incident* happened.

So, here's the thing. After her father hit her...

...what do you think she said to him?

You shouldn't do that, Father.

You mustn't punch girls in the face.

Creepy, isn't it?

Even I'd hit a kid like that.

That's scarier than an aberration.

Looking back on it—I understand.

Of course.

...H-Hanekawa is...

...always right.

That's... who Hanekawa is.

GA-KRAK

...with their own ugliness and immaturity.

It was Hell—one where they were constantly being confronted ...

Absolutely Correct

She was always showing them what it meant to be absolutely right—up close and personal, and all under the same roof.

You could even say it was out of fear.

Her parents feared her from the bottom of their hearts—which is why they tried to *avoid all contact* with her.

But it makes you wonder, *which side is the real victim here?*

It was like they'd been *forced* to raise a monster. I almost gotta hand it to them for putting up with that for ten-plus years.

What about you, Araragi? Can you really say she's *in the right?*

I'm neutral.

Really, Oshino...? Are you taking their side?

...

Oshino was trying to do something to stop me.

I knew why Oshino was telling me this...

...at this moment in time.

Well... I dunno... It's complicated.

I'm sure her parents have their own side, or...

The thing about the Afflicting Cat is...

So he won't tell me to stop. He can't.

That's Oshino's philosophy.

People just go and get saved on their own.

...it's an aberration that was originally thought up to serve as the antithesis of the *Manekineko*.

Good Fortune

Thriving Business

Domestic Safety Flourishing Business

10 Million Ryo [about 10 billion dollars]

Fortune

福

it's using top-level skills to repel my own techniques with nothing but the energy it sucks up from bystanders.

But this cat that's afflicting Missy Class President,

A low-level aberration—the bad-luck-causing Afflicting Cat as opposed to the luck-bringing Beckoning Cat.

It's all so irregular.

The cat afflicting her is an aberration that only exists inside her—you see.

In other words, this is a new breed. *Understand, Araragi?*

Even I don't know of an aberration like this.

That's *who she's always been.*

怨 Misfortune

Catastrophe

She curses them with a dark, catastrophic sorrow.

To those who would give her affection, she brings affliction.

...You're giving me the urge to kill.

That's enough. Could you just stop?

Oshino.

She's the only one to blame here. Even you during spring break—

If it's the latter, then you've still got some *decency* in you—

Or are you talking about Missy Class President?

Oh? Is that me you wanna kill?

...she's always been!

That's who...

I'll do this my way.

I'll do something that only I can pull off—

in a way that's uniquely my own.

If Hanekawa was going to reject me.

If she wasn't going to seek my help.

Then I'd just have to seek hers.

ARE YOU OKAY, ARARAGI ?!

As luck would have it...

Hey.

...I'm a man with a cornucopia of causes for concern.

A fount of fret.

Hanekawa

A vampire is going to kill me.
You need to help me.

Heh.

A vampire is going to kill me.
You need to help me.

This one text—

would be enough for Hanekawa.

...

Oh...

Of course...

...You're the worst, Araragi. You lied and got me worried. You know you shouldn't do that.

Ka khak!

Kaahk!

...

What is it?

Kahka-kakak!

Kahka-kakak!

I'm upset with you right now...

What's so funny about that?

What's the matter, model student? You're talking all wrong.

Where'd all the cat sounds go? All those *nyas* and *myas* and *meows*? That's one of the Afflicting Cat's character traits...

Right?

Oh.
Now I
get it.

When
did you
figure it
out?

I kind of had an idea... from the beginning.

Well.

Either way is fine, I guess. Haha!

No, I guess it'd be "Nyow I get it?"

That's right.

I'm your friend, you know.

Nowhere, Hanekawa... *except for inside yourself.*

It's just like Oshino said... There was never an aberration to be found in the first place.

There was never—anything about her that was out of character.

In other words, *this is you.*

No exaggerations, nothing added on top—just your honest, genuine self.

A calico when I looked closely.

Sure enough, it was just a regular cat.

The grave of the cat that got run over... I dug it back up.

If a friend sends you a message asking for help, it doesn't matter what you're facing.

It's like an instinct for you—like a cat playing with a ball of yarn. You have to rush over.

That's how hopelessly kind you are.

That's who you are.

When you targeted and beat the crap out of me—that was only because *you knew I'd be okay!*

Even when it came to the 300 bystanders you attacked—you absorbed their energy, but it was barely anything more than a prank. All they really did was faint.

I get it! Just living itself has to be tiring when you're that ridiculously strong, that ridiculously kind!

Relieved from the bottom of your heart—because a vampire hadn't killed me.

You know what? I bet you're even a little relieved right now!

I even get that you'd want to create an aberration, blame it all on her, and show off that glorious, pride-worthy body while you're at it!

...but seeing me in my underwear got you excited, didn't it?

BLOOP

なでーん?

JIGGLE

You say that, Arara-gi...

Breasts are just part of the scenery if there's no shame involved!

Really?

What ?!

nono 翼

TSUBASAcat

17

語 *gatari*

bake 化

mono

bake

And that

—is also me?

This is...

...me.

Arara...

TIP

What are you... saying?

...

Stop being unrea-sonable.

I struggle, too.

Even I have things I can and can't do.

There are lots of things I want to do but can't—

Even I'm human, you know?

You know you're not human!

DON'T YOU DARE CALL YOUR-SELF A HUMAN RIGHT NOW.

You entrusted your body to an aberration.

Do human heads grow ears like that?

Hm?

What an awful thing to say...

...

THROB

You know why I turned out this way.

How are you able to say something like that— to someone in my situation?

That's awful. You couldn't be any worse. Don't you feel any sympathy for me?

E

F

Hell no!

You got sent around from one family to another!

You have no idea who your real dad is! Your birth mom took her own life!!

Then you ended up with two unrelated parents who couldn't care less about you and forced you to sleep in the hallway because they wouldn't even give you a room in their giant house!

But you were still strong! You forced yourself to act like a normal, good girl, and you actually managed to pull it off!

I know I shouldn't say this, but what an unfortunate life!

Talk about unlucky!

Isn't that just fine?

But you know what?

Is that really so bad?

THROB

THROB

THROB

So you'll keep on living the same life you've been living all this time, without having settled anything with your mom and dad who just got out of the hospital!

You're the kind of person who can smile and stay positive no matter what awful thing happens to you, then head home looking like nothing ever happened.

THROB

But Hanekawa ...

The thing is... that—

THROB

THROB

That's who you are.

You're just going to drag this with you! Even if you somehow beat the odds and become happy someday, it's not going to matter!

THROB

Because you can never *erase it*! It's going to sit in your heart forever! You'll remember it just when you thought you forgot it! You'll dream about it for the rest of your life!

No matter what, you'll still be you.

THROB

Turn into an aberration.

Put on a mechanical mask. Hide behind your good girl act.

Hane-
kawa.

That's—
who *we* are.

Shoulder
it.

So
don't
pretend
to
ignore
it.

There's no
changing
that now.

GWASH—!!

...

THKKT

TREMBLE

TREMBLE

TREMBLE

MROW ?!

TWITCH

TRMBL

TRMBL

TRMBL

But if you still want to relieve your stress, then—I'll take it all on.

VZZZZZSH

SQUEEZ

SWOOO

SQUEEZ

SQUEEZ

TWIDDLE

TWID

TWID

I'd be happy to feel up your breasts whenever you want.

I'll lick any part of your body while you're in your underwear...

I don't know if the way you corrected yourself is any better!

I hope you can content yourself with that.

I'll lick you, but only with my eyes.

No.

How could I ask you...

...to accept someone like me?

You really are the worst, Araragi.

The only thing I can become is a vampire.

So you're not going to become my hero—Araragi?

Oh.

How could I expect you—to accept someone like me?

What was I think-ing?

メイレ

DIE

just die

just die

just die

just die

just die

just die

Mya-ha! You're going to take on all of my stress nyow, Araragi?

So you don't mind if I mewder you?

How wonderful.

That's ...

...why I came here, after all.

It'd be like a dream come true.

Go ahead.

just die

BA-KRAK

I want ... ...to die by your hand—

just die

BOOM

ГЛОТ
ГЛОТ
ГЛОТ
ГЛОТ

МУАНАНА
НАНА
НАНА

Ara-
ragi.

You
know
...

KLIK

KLINK

SKREEE

24 OPEN

You
really—
don't know
anything.

Like how
much...

How very
much I
expected
from you.

Heh.

No.

It's
fine.

Want
me to
head
home
with
you?

Ha...
...

Ha!

Mya-
haha!

WAAH あーん

WAAH

WAAH あーん

I thought you'd have what it takes to stop me.

Death

Death

Heh.

...why wasn't I able to be honest and just say yes?

I did. And yet—

that day ...

...Heh.

...come back for me?

That day—why couldn't you...

Just die.

I should just die.

After...

...a slight delay...

...an almost comical amount of pain ran through my body.

Ah—

Ow!

...!

Ow...

TWITCH

TWITCH

Ah!

Ah!

Enngh!

Ah.

CHATTER

Eergh!

CHATTER

AAAA

I...I'm not wounded...!

There isn't... a single scratch on me—

Ah... Araragi! What did you do? To my body? To me?!

Haha- ha...

That's not like you, Hanekawa... Keheheh...

You must know I'd never so much as leave a scratch on that divine body of yours.

The one I cut, Hanekawa.

It wasn't you.

Kha-
ah!

I
swal-
lowed
it
before
you
got
here!

I
started—

with
myself.

KRAKL 110ft

Though for a gentleman such as myself, provoking you with such terrible lies like saying I'd grope your breasts or that you should let me lick your butt was much more hellish than having a blade down the center of my body, of course—

Serves you right!

This is what happens when you befriend someone like me, Hanekawa!

You're the one who shouldn't have touched me!

Cat!

Well, Hanekawa—no...!

Stay away, don't you touch the Afflicting Cat—isn't that what they say?

Aberration

Kokoro-watari. The enchanted blade

Also known—as the Aberration Slayer.

A lethal weapon made to kill aberrations and nothing else.

A renowned and unparalleled sword against an aberration.

But against anything else—it couldn't even cut through jelly.

In other words, I wouldn't have to leave a scratch on Hanekawa herself—

That's like a cheat code ...

...the cat?!

You only cut...

I never told you about it!

You didn't know about it, did you?!

Not even *you* know *everything*.

Don't worry, Hanekawa.

So...

...in that case!

...!

You really think you can act like you know everything there is to life after a little more than a dozen years of existence? Are you kidding me?!

Don't act like you know every-thing and then go say some crap like, "I should just die"!

WHEEZ

WHEEZ

I can hardly believe it.

How fortunate can a guy be?

I'm going to die.

Brrrgh!

Yeergh! Yeerbh!

And, in fact, there are no signs of anything below my torso growing back.

This cat's attack stole my energy and vampiric healing abilities.

I'm going to die. For Hanekawa. I—get to die for her.

Well, yes.

Now, for number two...

None of this... means a thing.

I understand—of course I do.

...

I think I know what Oshino wanted to tell me then. "*You—*

will only be dying in vain."

...of going out and saving you.

It's why I don't have any intention...

Which is why—Hanekawa, that's the reason why...

Resetting Hanekawa's aberration won't do a thing to solve her problems.

KRAKL

KRAKL

KRAKL

But none of them... blame it all on an aberration. They *don't rely* on an aberration—and they still live their lives.

I bet... there are a lot of people in situations like yours.

That's what I think.

So...forget about me and all these horrible things I'm saying.

Stop acting...so spoiled, you dummy.

HSSHT

HSSHT

WHEEZ

You—just do your best.

That I'd die for your sake.

I just made a decision back then.

You can do this
on your own—
find happiness.

You can do this.
You can do this.

Haa.

Haah.

Haah.

Heh.

...

The best friend...

...a person could have.

You really are...

...my hero.

Ha!

Ha!

Ha!

Ha!

Ha!

You know, Araragi.

szzzz

GRRRT

Sorry.
But...

...I knew.
About
that
sword.

After all, remember what happened during spring break?

Miss Heart-Under-Blade told us about it.

WOBBLE

WOBBLE

TWITCH

TREMBLE TREMBLE TREMBLE

TWITCH

That must be why you thought I didn't know about it.

True—she didn't say a thing about its abilities at the time.

It's not that hard—to guess how capable it is.

If this sword was made to protect Miss Heart-Under-Blade from *something like that*.

An aberration capable of instantly swallowing up the most powerful of vampires and the most powerful of exorcists.

So...

SLIDE

THUD

For killing me.

...thank you, Araragi.

So...

No...

You cut my aberration—the one I birthed—and so I'm going to die.

I've completely merged with this aberration now.

Because I've already realized it. It's too late for me.

I got to meet you.

That—

I'm so glad, Araragi.

Heh heh.

...but now I can die...

...with such joy.

...

Hane... kawa?

I may have been born into sorrow...

Hanekawa ??!!

トロ

DRIBBLE

Huh ...?

BA-KRAK

ZSHH

KRAKL
KRAKL
KRAKL
KRAKL
SNAP
SNAP
KRAKL
TREMBLE
KRAKL
TREMBLE
Urgh
!
Hyee
!
TWITCH
TWITCH
TREMBLE
Orgh
!
Eergh
!
Hyee
!
Agh
!
SPLTCH

GROOOAR

Wha?

BAKEMONOGATARI

However rotted, weakened, or close to death...

...an aberration— is still an aberration.

KRAK!
KRAK!
KRAK!
KRAK!

Ah!

Agh!

MEOO-OOO-OOW!

The cat wounded by the enchanted sword ...

...is breaking away from Hane-kawa as a last resort ...?!

DRAG

DRAG

Aahh !

Eek !

GRNPH!

SNAP

GRNPH!

EEEH!

GRNPH!

Fft!

Fft!

Fft!

GLANCE

GLANCE

Ah!

ZHLRR

GRRKT

SNIFF

SNIFF

Eek!

Agh—

Nah... Ah, aahh!

Aagh!

...!

No!

Stop pulling ...

Cat?!

What do you think you're doing—

...what you told me?

Don't you remember ...

Dam-mit...!

GRRT

I can't just...

...die in peace here.

Eergh!

Ghya-ahk!

Aa-ahh!

THWAP

THWAP

THWAP

ZHLR-

ZHLR

Weren't you going— to save Hanekawa?

What Hanekawa wants...

Hane-kawa...

Why are you making her suffer like this?

...is to become
a normal girl.

If I stay inside my myaster, she, too, will die.

Go with her and find happiness together.

Wait ...!

GFFH

Using my blade in such a reckless manner.

Art thou a dunce, servant?

THP

十四

...

...Ngh!

CHWIP

PA-KRAK

SPLAT

SHHKK

As ever and always...

...I see thine attention lieth only on what standeth before thee.

I shall give thee a flawless example, so watch.

This is how you slay an aberration. There is no need for any blade.

ZHK

My healing abilities ...

They're back...!

Ah...!

FSSHH

FSSHH

SPLURCH

Watch in fascination.

CHOMP
CHOMP
KRAK
KRAK
SNAP
SNAP
SNAP
BSSHT
POP
ZHLR
ZHLR
BSSHT
KRAK
KRAK
CHOMP
CHOMP
I always wanted ...
SPLAT
SPLAT
SPLAT
...to become a normal girl.
For my personality to be normal.
To have normal parents.
To be born into a normal family.
To fall in love like normal.
GRIND
KRAK
SNAP
Stop it...
...
BA-KRAK
SPLURCH
POP
GRIND

Do not think thou canst go off and die on thine own when thou hast forced me to live.

KRUNCH

SPLHK

SPLHK

SPLHK

KRAK KRAK KRAK

No...

Stop...

Such is the price thou must pay—for continuing my existence.

...of those born with inhuman power.

Such is the fate...

The greatest sorrow knowable as a human being—surely it willeth rule thy life.

Thou wilt find suffering and only suffering—thou mayest think that no suffering in this world could be greater, only to be met with sorrow that easily surpasses it.

Thou mayest think that Hell is a place already known to thee, but thou wouldst be terribly mistaken.

POP
SPLAT
SPLAT
GRIND
POP
KRUNCH
KRUNCH
POP
KRAK
KRAK
GRAKK

Not when the normal goal for people is not to be normal.

There's no way I could be a normal girl. Not now.

I really do know. —I know.

Aahh!

So this...

...is where I die.

Aahh!

Aahh!

Please, just stop it...

I want to die!

Aaaa!

Ah!

Araragi is going to kill me, and I'm going to die!

Aah!

Aah!

...

Why, why ?!!!

Why?!! Why?!
Why?!! Why?!

—Why?!

I want to die!

I have returned to this land after four hundred years— to find thee here.

One day, thou wilt change the very shape of this world.

SNAP SNAP SNAP

KRAKL KRAKL

I do not believe this to be a coincidence.

FSSHH

THIS IS FINE, HANE-KAWA!

THIS RIGHT HERE!

THIS IS FINE!

But we'll always be the same! We'll always be together!

I know we're all screw-ups!

The two of us will always, always, always be friends!

So isn't this just fine?!

...

I know how you'll never be able to come back from it all and how there's no escape for you, either— Hah!

I know it's miserable for you and that you deserve better.

DAMN!

SO THERE'S STILL SOME OF THAT CAT IN YOU...?!

But whatever the case.

?!!

Then actually grope my breasts next time.

...

we were putting off the issue at hand.

As bloodily as in a nightmare, as frantically as in a dream come true—

This is how it would be for us.

Hmph.

For now, at least.

I shall find this accept-able.

BAKEMONOGATARI

Good morning, Araragi.

Good morning, Hane-kawa.

I see your breasts continue to be big today.

FWEET FWOO!

I summoned up everything inside of me in an attempt to act normal.

It was ...

...the next morning.

HAHA! THAT'S RIGHT! I'M ACTUALLY PRETTY EXCITED TO REALLY GIVE THIS EVERYTHING I'VE GOT! IF WE'RE GONNA DO THIS, WE GOTTA MAKE SOMETHING AWESOME! WE CAN'T LET ANY OTHER CLASS SHOW US UP!

Nobody could keep up with that...

...You're going to kill everyone around you if you give it everything you got, so could you not...?

Wha... R- Really?

I have a feeling that you're going to be the last member of humanity ever allowed to commit such blatant sexual harassment first thing in the morning, Araragi.

Th-That aside... it's almost time for the cultural festival, huh?

As for Hanekawa— she was the same as ever...

...thanks to Oshino erasing all of her memories relating to the cat.

FLUTTER
ゾゾ
ゾゾ
FLUTTER

I'd be lying.

If I were to say she was exactly the same as she was before Golden Week—

Still...

We'll need to start by getting you, my vice president, to really apply yourself to the project.

...
Okay.

Miss Hanekawa... isn't that skirt... a little too short...?

...

Hm?

And I was thinking—maybe it's because you let me smack you the other day.

IT'S BEEN SO LONG SINCE I'VE FELT THIS WAY—OR EVEN...

IT MIGHT BE THE FIRST TIME I'VE FELT THIS WAY IN MY WHOLE LIFE!

FOR WHATEVER REASON, I FELT INCREDIBLY REFRESHED WHEN I WOKE UP THIS MORN-ING!

Which is why I shortened my skirt by one inch for each letter in "t-h-a-n-k-s"!

As a reward.

THIS IS YOUR IDEA OF A REWARD?!

FWISH

...

Oh my, Miss Hanekawa.

W-WELL... CONSIDER IT A PART OF THE REWARD...

DOING THIS... REALLY LOWERS YOUR LEVEL OF SECURITY, HUH.

... SORRY.

You've forgotten to put on underwear.

I personally liked you better that way.

Given up on the honor student character, perhaps?

...Oh.

I'm wearing some...

And it seems you had an unexcused absence.

HUH?!

BAM

The thing about humans...

WHY DON'T WE TALK SOME MORE?

THAT'S THE FIRST TIME YOU'VE EVER SPOKEN TO ME, MISS SENJO-GAHARA!

There's an urge to solve all those problems, but you'd be surprised by how many people will accept you, problems and all.

...is that, in a way, it's natural for them to live while facing one problem after the next.

On the other hand, actually solving one problem could make another one worse, or it could get you into a new problem.

So we keep putting our problems off.

It could be that our lives are defined—by our problems.

...so we can work hard.

It could be that we're working hard to dream...

...is all wrong.

When you look at it that way,

the idea that we're working hard to make our dreams come true...

I wonder—what kind of dreams does Hanekawa have?

Flash-back over.

So that's an outline of the dustup that happened with the "black cat" over Golden Week.

So this is where you were, Araragi.

Did you... figure anything out?

Huh, Oshi-no?

Could you stop wandering around so much when I'm nearby?

You can't go three steps without bringing a new problem to me.

THWAK

If we're just talking about Missy Class President— she doesn't have a single memory of being Black Hanekawa.

She really doesn't seem to remember a thing about Golden Week.

But... isn't that *odd?*

"Black Hane-kawa."

I thought that was a pretty accurate name for her.

...and let it all out until there was nothing left— so is it really possible for the same level of stress to build up inside of her in just one month?

She took the stress that had built up toward her family over seventeen years...

That dark, dark, dark, blacked-out being...

TWITCH

JIGGLE JIGGLE

...was unmistakably Tsubasa Hanekawa.

Our cat is a cat, Araragi.

Nope, that's not it.

Is it a split personality or something?

So does— *that* side of Hanekawa have nothing to do with cats?

...but Missy Class President really did come into contact with the Afflicting Cat at some point.

I dunno about when she was with you...

So many different— faces.

Hun- dreds.

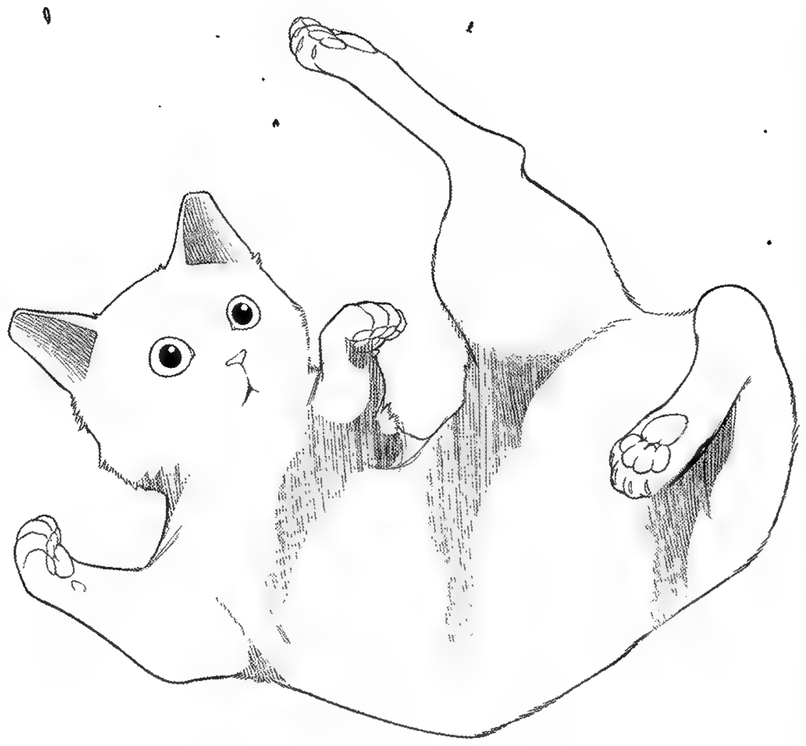
Hanekawa has— dozens.

...Ngh ...

But all of them—are Hanekawa!

None of them are Hanekawa.

It, too, may have been a victim here.



tossed into those countless Hanekawas— was a cat.

And tossed into that—

You have to wonder...

...*which* was the one to be possessed by an aberration?

KEEP OUT
STAY OUT
KEEP OUT
NO TRESPASSING
非常口

She must've been able to let go of the cat whenever she wanted.

That was just more convenient for her.

But she put all the blame on it instead.

...God, what a handful ...

And so... she used that as an excuse to go on a spree and have all the wicked fun she wanted— huh?

...I did it because I felt annoyed.

Ah- nyo-ed.

Well...

There's no such thing as a girl who isn't a handful, Araragi.

Did that happen?

Hm?

You were a mess after losing something like a hundred fights against Black Hanekawa, right?

...Oh, I guess I still haven't thanked you yet.

So, thanks.

Who knows, maybe even some deaths.

If you hadn't lost on purpose to play punching bag for us— I think there would have been a lot more damage.

What should I do about her...?

SIGH...

Well... The bigger issue—is Hanekawa.

SCRATCH...

...

Why don't you marry her?

...

Huh ?!!

She'd finally get the family she always wanted... and it should get rid of the cat.

The way I see it, everything is nice and settled if you just marry Missy Class President.

Wh... Where'd that come from?

I'm giving you a way to resolve this.

FIRST OFF, I'VE GOT A GIRLFRIEND NAMED SENJO-GAHARA AND—

I mean!

Well!

H-HEY... THAT'S NOT FUNNY, OSHINO! YOU CAN'T JUST MAKE AN OFFHANDED JOKE ABOUT THAT!

Then why don't you break up with her.

Huh.

...

I was convinced that you're in love with Missy Class President.

チャーーチャーーチャ チャーチャーチ チャーラーチャーチャチャ チャチャチャチャチャラッ

DUN DUN DA-DUN DUN DUN DA

DUHN DUN DA-DUN DUN DADADADA DA DUN

Happy Wedding

...should just get married.

...getting married.

We're...

You two ...

BAKEMONOGATARI

I was convinced that you're in love with Missy Class President.

We need to consider Hanekawa's feelings here... It's not like she's asked me to help her or anything—right?

First off...

Er... Li-Listen, you need to stop being ridiculous.

Even when it comes to Golden Week, I feel like I got involved when I didn't need to—that maybe it was none of my business.

You ended up being the one she relied on, Oshino.

Like, maybe, I just got in her way.

Like I butted in—like I stuck my nose right in her business.

That's right.

Like you were just butting in?

Hm?

...
Ara-
ragi.

I've got a story for you.

Mind listening ?

A regular one—the kind you'd find anywhere.

It's about a family.

This family had bought a house.

A used one. Lots of space for the price. They were real happy.

Anyway, monsoon season started a little while after they moved in.

Nothing but gloomy rain, day after day.

EVERYDAY
ALL-YOU-CAN-EAT
100 MIN 980 YEN/ PER
Kids under 5 eat for FREE
Kids 5- for HALF
100 m this way

There were no signs of anyone entering it from the outside, either.

...

...it wouldn't open. Regardless of the fact— that it wasn't locked.

One morning— the father tried to open the door to the study, and...

CHNK
CHNK
CHNK

?!!!

?!

...

?

That was the reason the house had been sold at a discount.

...one of the previous residents died here...

That's when they remembered something.

Y—

You know, they did say...

That's when they asked a shady diviner who happened to be in town to solve their problem.

It was an aberration that *forbids entry.*

The diviner figured out the reason in no time.

So, anyway ...

Ha haa.

Were you even listening to me?

Why this story?

By calling it an investigation, this diviner was able to get himself a free and pleasant place to stay.

Nothing to do with aberrations— just a natural phenomenon.

Dude...

...

The door was now fixed in place, with no space between it and its frame.

All the rain had caused the wood around the door to expand.

ABSORPTION

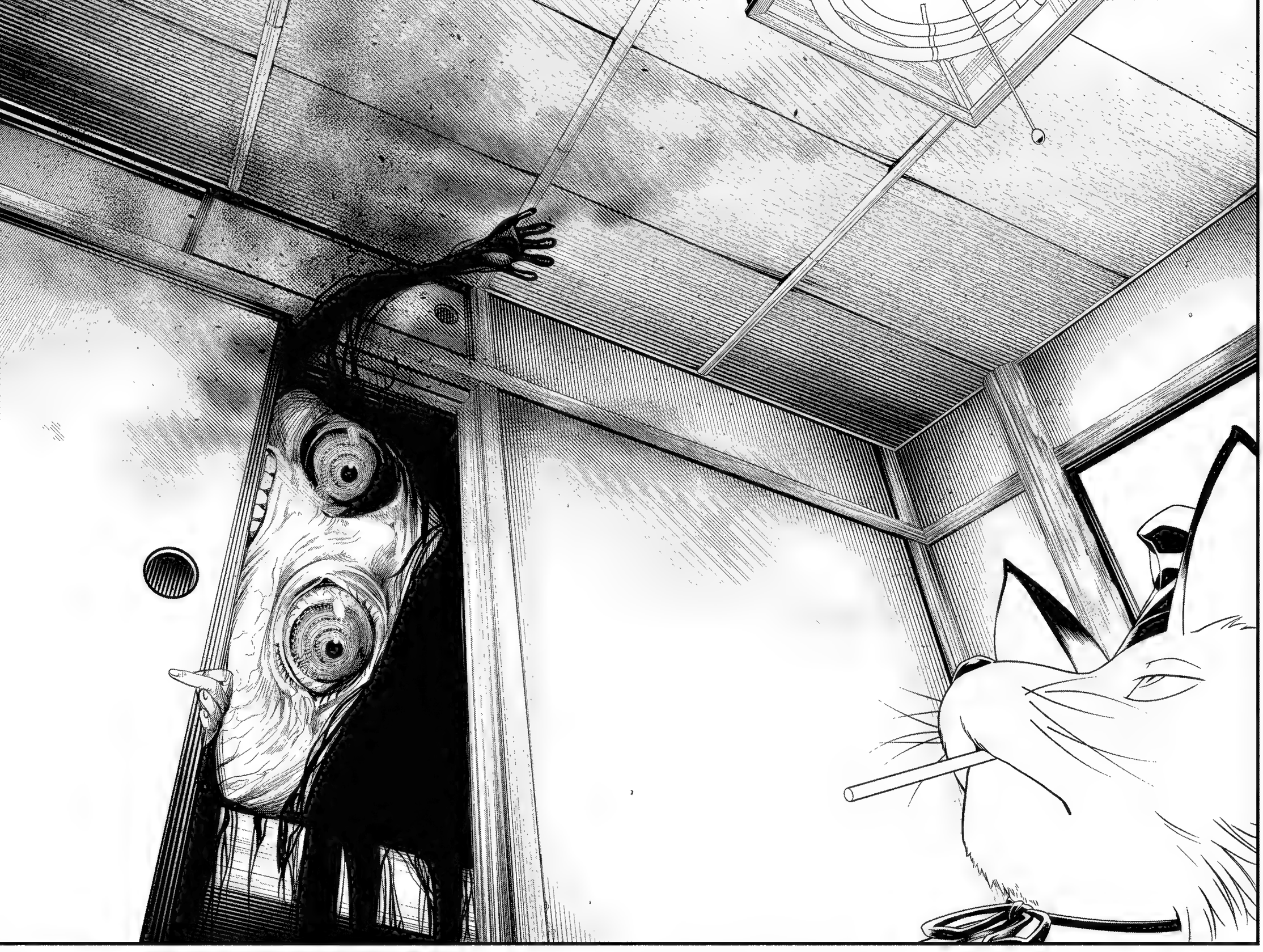
SQUEEZE

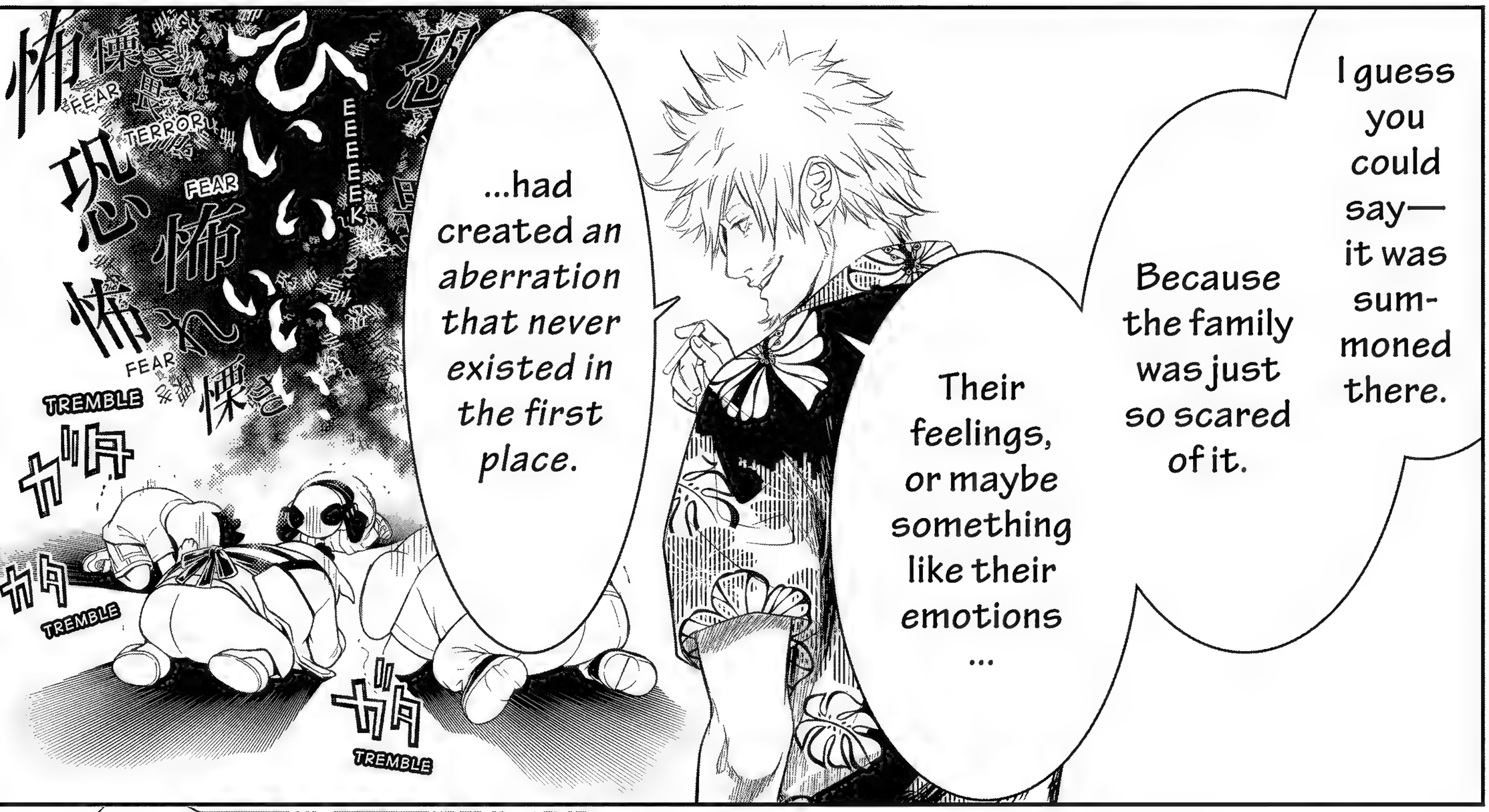
SQUEEZE

SQUEEZE

But just as he was thinking that...

Once the monsoon season ended, the moisture would drop, and the door would open on its own.




...had created an aberration that never existed in the first place.
Their feelings, or maybe something like their emotions ...
Because the family was just so scared of it.
I guess you could say— it was summoned there.
TREMBLE
FEAR
TERROR
EEEEEK

What does this have to do with Haneka—
Again, Oshino.
So, in the end— the diviner had no choice but to actually do the work he was paid for.

Aberrations aren't born due to a cause.

It's the same with Missy Class President's cat, Araragi.

Aberrations are born because you think there's one there.

...So the cause of Hanekawa's aberration...

...wasn't her family or the environment she was born into...

You're saying it was... Hanekawa's own *state of mind?*

There'd have been no uproar, and they never would've been ripped off by that diviner.

Had the father stayed calm and come to the logical conclusion on that first morning,

RATTY OLD THING!

FBONK

FBONK

...if you don't find them, then they may as well never have existed to begin with.

Aberrations—are everywhere. But—the thing is...

If she turns those emotions toward something else, Hanekawa herself will start to change—

and in that case...

If Hanekawa isn't shackled to her past or any root causes—

That's what Oshino told me.

...it would be possible for her to someday live a life disconnected from aberrations.

...why don't you go and be Missy Class President's lifelong best friend?

So...

The marriage stuff or the romance stuff—

you can forget about that.

It's not about you doing anything for her.

You just need to be by her side.

Best friends.

...

Always ...

...by her side.

Having someone by your side.

That's all it takes for someone to go and get saved on their own.

When she's down.

When she's in trouble.

I'd always be right there—by her side.

That might be the one and only thing I can do for her.

Oshino isn't saying anything about it— but...

...he has to have noticed.

What happened then.

FWOOM

GSSFT

We'll always be the same! We'll always be together!

This is fine, Hanekawa!

The two of us will always, always, always be friends!

Was that really the right thing to say?

And indeed— I did say that.

I said that, but— I have to wonder.

During spring break.

She took the blood of Kiss-Shot Acerola-Orion Heart-Under-Blade deep into her body.

To be more accurate, she took in *the blood of the king of aberrations via my body.*

No.

...took in my blood...

Hane-kawa...

That's when Hane-kawa clearly began to harbor an aber-ration.

That was the mo-ment.

Aberration

But *before that in-cident*— she was just a human.

She must have always had some kind of affinity for it.

It's my fault.

If things keep escalating like this, there's a very real chance that Hanekawa might take somebody's life.

If only that hadn't happened, then maybe we never would've had any cat trouble to deal with over Golden Week.

...so long as I'm around.

Hanekawa can never get away from aberrations ...

...and kill her.

Then some-

probably Oshino— will exor-cise her...

After all— I'm an aberration myself.

Not to Hanekawa, and not to Oshino.

There's no way I'm doing that.

...just bring more and more misfortune to Hanekawa?

Won't being near her ...

LEAN のそ

You know reality's no different from an aberration, right?

KRUNCH ミシャッ

Which is to say, you just really piss me off.

Ha haa. You really are indecisive.

Wai—

Huh?

Huh?

BOOM

...

If something you couldn't see before makes itself shown...

OOOOOOOO

...that means you've reached a terminus.

Ara-ragi.

ああああ

ああああ

SMAK

SMAK

GNASH

GNASH

GNASH

FLUTTER

FLUTTER

FLUTTER

FLUTTER

Sorry—
Oshino.

You're
annoyed.
I get that.

I don't know
the reason
why...but
I can tell
Hanekawa's
reached
her limit.

The cat
wouldn't
make an
appearance
otherwise.

...

GNASH

GNASH

GNASH

Though... you know...

You can tell me to always stay by Hanekawa's side,

but when it really comes down to it— there's nothing I can do.

SNAPSNAP

CHOMP

CHOMP KRAK

SNAP

Thou...

ZHLRT

CHOMP

PREE

PAIKRAK PAIKRAK

SNAP SNAP

RRRI

Though, I have to wonder if I'd just be getting in her way or dragging her down somehow.

All that stuff you said about marriage could be a joke,

but even so, if I could help her in some way, I would...

I could just as simply have devoured him here and now.

I believed *thou* might *do this.*

...thou shouldst have left this town at once.

With the barrier dispelled...

That'd been my plan, too.

Yeah, well.

'twas unneces-sary.

But what thou hadst this one do the other day—

I had spared thee, for thou art a useful fellow.

Guess I was right.

Seems like *it worked.*

Ha haa.

Hm? Oh... Yeah, right. I guess you've also got a lot of thinking to do.

Well...yeah... Your words are having an effect on me, as much as I hate to admit it...

SNAP SNAP

CHOMP MUNCH

PA-KRAK

Why I came to this town?

Araragi—do you remember?

SMACH SMECH SMACH SMECH

SPLATCH

SPLATCH

SPLAP

SPLAP

ZLRR

...gathering in this town—I told you that, yeah?

There were *bad things*...

...the other king of aberrations.

GCCHT ギキ

Hm?

Oh... Yeah.

Um... And the ones causing these *bad things* to gather are...

...me, and...

That's right.

You, and...

POP POP POP CHOMP

...?

Huh?

But you see—
I never said
a word
about this
"other king"
being Shinobu.

Shinobu's
nothing but
the *dregs* of a
vampire now—
forget about
her.

Isn't there
someone in
this town
far more
suited to be
royalty?

An energy-drain that neutralizes humans with a single touch.

A level of knowledge about incantations that'd put an aberrations expert to shame.

The physical abilities and offensive capabilities of an aberration.

Humanity's greatest mind.

She must not realize it herself yet.

To be precise, she's *on the verge.*

Ha-Hane-kawa's —

Ho-Hold up... No... Wait a second, Oshino!

But the *bad things* in this town...

...need a new king of aberrations.

That's what I'd really call an emperor with no clothes.

You don't get a title like king just by claiming it for yourself.

Kings are born because they're needed.

SPLAP
SPLAP
SPLAP
ZLRR
SPLAP
KA-CHAK
KA-CHAK
KA-CHAK
KA-CHAK

You don't really believe that a person only wants your help when they ask directly...right?

We've all got things that aren't easy to say on a whim.

Right, Araragi?

But what I do think—is that it's better if someone was there to keep an eye on her.

Listen... I'm not saying she needs to be domesticated.

ドドド

BWOOF

HAKK!

THP

WHAT WAS THAT?

YOU MIGHT BE SMOKING TOO MUCH, OSHINO!

FSSHH

Mmh... Well... Yeah.

You're right about that, but...

Bring Shinobu over.

Isn't asking her for help the only way to deal with this?

Putting whatever the future holds aside... what we need to do now is deal with the cat right in front of us.

Hm.

As in— one bad thing tends to lead to another.

Hmm... Yeah, maybe... But you know what they say, when it rains, it pours.

But we need to do something before we end up with more victims on our hands.

Sure, I doubt it'll be easy to get her to act.

...day...

Come to think of it, he *has* been acting weird all day to...

...Are you trying to cover something up here?

I spotted a vampire girl here yesterday.

What a coinci-dence.

There's something I wanted you to ask me, too.

...

Oshino... There's something I want to ask you.

Yep. That's the question.

WHAT HAPPENED TO SHINOBU?

...

...

...

Shi-
nobu
...

...went off on a journey of self-discovery.

KER-SHANK

One bad thing leads to another. When it rains, it pours.

SGRRRK

KER-SHANK

IT'S JUST ONE THING AFTER ANOTH-ER!

...AGH! DAMMIT!

KER-SHANK

KER-SHANK

She knows that—better than anyone.

And she still chose to leave—which means...!

...NGH!

BAM

SKRRR

She'll starve to death in a week or so if she doesn't drink my blood.

Shinobu—has to stay close to me.

What did I tell you, Araragi?

There's no such thing as a girl who isn't a handful.

That was something you also had to find out for yourself...

Right, my dear senior?

ZSSSSHHH

That author, Neko Nekobe— Ah, c'mon...

You know ...

By, uh...

All this reminds me of that one manga. *Neko-Neko Fantasia.*

Ha haa. I do have to say, though.

No tact at all...

SWOOSH

ZBLAT

THUD

THUD

Don't confuse things just because both include the word for cat.

Neko Nekobe wrote *Goldfish Warnying!*

—!!

That's the kind of joke I was setting up, hoping someone'd bite.

Ha haa. That's it.

That Hawaiian Shirt guy still has some use.

...

...

You can kill him whenever you want—

Meow.

SWOOSH

BWOOF

ガブッ

ZSSHH

Araragi.

Araragi

...

You don't know, do you?

Let's see— judging by...

...your face...

If you only need to say a few words to make something like *that* back off— what use do you have for me, exactly?

Now this is a surprise.

Job request for me?

It's the fact that I'd fallen in love.

With an inhuman power.

With an inhuman something. With an inhuman world.

SHHKK

SHHKK

SHHKK

SHHKK

That fact was the one thing capable of freeing me from this dull world.

That's what I believed.

I...

...was fascinated by a vampire.

Araragi ...

You don't know, do you?

That for so long, I was my stress.

It was all that was inside of me, after all.

But that stress went away during Golden Week.

I died.

Which is why there's nothing inside of me now.

Aside from these feelings, there's...

... nothing ...

...supporting me.

ZSSHH

SHINO-
BUUU
!!!

SHADDAP!

カラッ RATTLE

SORRY!

There's no reason she'd respond...

...

Today is—

June 13.

Contacts

Favorites

Is she still even in this town ...?

And wait...

But I can't give up on that yet.

Maybe she's in the bath?

PRRRING

PRRRING

PRRRING

...

She's not picking up at all...

A day to remember, one where my personal Hell would come to an end—

or at least, that was the plan.

...

That's the first thing she says to me...?

If you're late for our date, I'm stripping you naked and shoving you in the girls' locker room.

Why would I want anything from you now?!

So, what do you want?

It was too much of a bother to pick up the phone, and I let it sit in my pocket without checking who the caller was, but it rang for so long that I gave up and checked only to see that it was you, which made me think I didn't have to pick up after all, so I went to press the power button to hang up on you but accidentally pressed the call button instead and had no choice but to take it.

No? Not particularly?

Senjogahara.

Could you hear me out?

She doesn't show any signs of letting up, even on the phone...

Hm...
Huh.
Is that so.

The, uh, blonde kid?

Shi-nobu?
Oh.

Put Part B together with Saito.

Instructions on P6 of the print-out.

Thank you!!

So?

What is it?

I'm not!

I guess I have no choice if you're getting down on all fours.

BOOK
SKETCH

Wait.

Are you still at school?!

I am.

I'm not helping you find her.

Things are a mess here because Miss Hanekawa left school early.

It's utterly ridiculous, and the fact that she was able to manage this madness— makes me question her sanity.

And not a thing is working the way it should.

To be frank, even speaking to you like this is a waste of valuable time.

I'm hang-ing up.

Ah—

Um ...

Wa...Wait a second.

I was convinced ...

...that you're in love with Missy Class President.

Uh...

...Senjo-gahara.

So... Um...

Do you remem-ber...what we talked about after we took care of things with your crab?

...Ara-ragi.

If you're going to spout nonsense, could you please do it in modera-tion?

I...

How could I ever...

...forget a single word of that?

...need to make it clear.

For my own sake.

I'm the same— I haven't forgotten a second...

...of what Senjogahara said back then.

Ara-ragi...

So.

By Mister Oshino?

Are you not going to get your vampirism fixed?

No. I chose this for myself.

I'm always going to be this way.

...I see.

...

I...

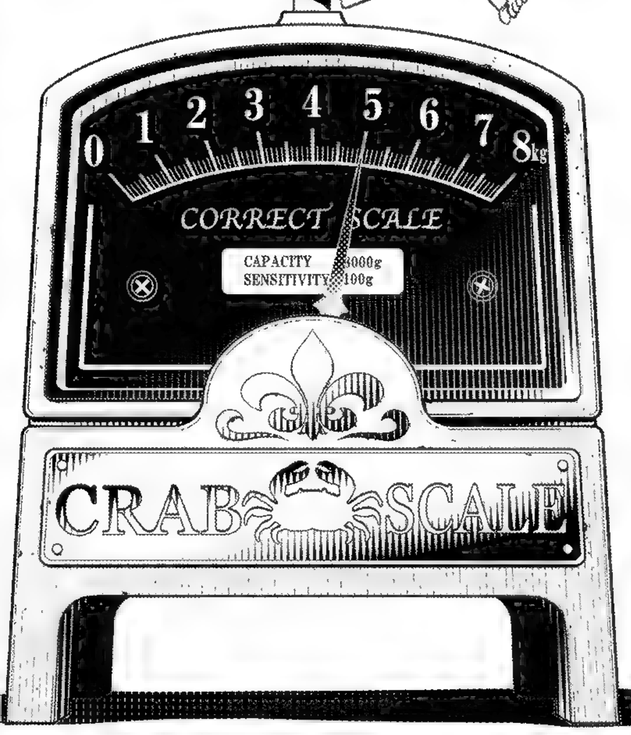
...was always thinking about it.

Why did I weigh just five kilograms— why was I left with just that?

I thought my existence was so thin that it only added up to five kilograms or so.

It was roughly my value.

But I was wrong. That wasn't it.



In other words, everything aside from the five kilograms left behind, the vast majority of myself—was my heart.

The crab—it shouldered all the weight of my heart.

It was the other way around.

I was someone who was almost all heart.

That's all.

There wasn't much to what was left behind.

And in your case, maybe being a vampire doesn't really mean much either, Araragi.

...for me.

At least that's how it is...

...couldn't have been understood by anyone aside from me.

It might be— that her feelings then...

...

...that had never so much as crossed my mind before.

That was an idea...

"My value as a person mostly comes from my heart."

I thought that a large part of why I needed to keep on living—

...was the responsibility I was left with because of the mess I'd made.

I thought that being a vampire...

that the value of my existence—was in being a vampire.

That it was far more important for me to keep being me.

...told me something then.

But Hitagi Senjogahara ...

That being a vampire didn't really matter one way or the other.

That's...

...what she told me.

GRAVEMONJ
OMEMONSHO

BAKEMONOGATARI
17

And in your case, maybe being a vampire...

...doesn't really mean much either, Araragi.

...really...

...mean much.

It doesn't ...

Thanks, Senjo-gahara.

I, um...

Well...

She'd only said what was on her mind.

If I weren't me—

If I weren't the person I'd become after experiencing Hell over spring break, I doubt the words would have meant much at all.

You don't seem to get it, Araragi.

If you're going to thank me,

do it with words that would cause me to jump with joy.

It was as if—

What Senjogahara said then—those words.

it makes me think.

Which is why—

BOOK

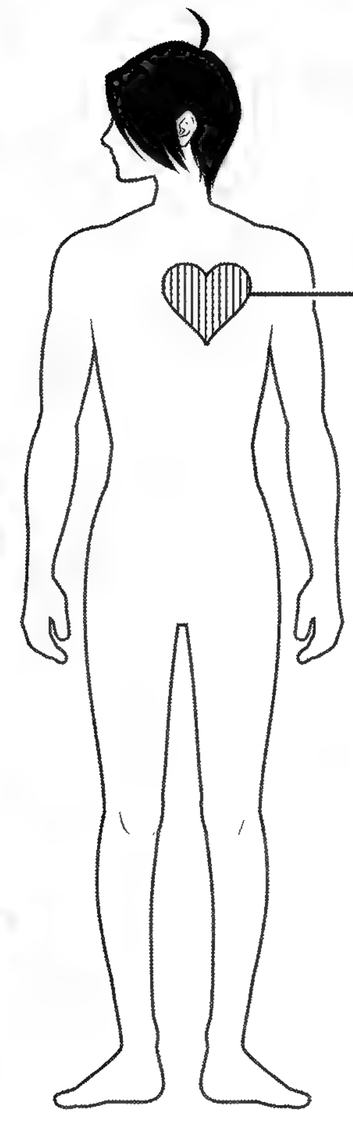
I can't believe you're raising the bar that high for yourself.

My, how much more of a masochist can you be?

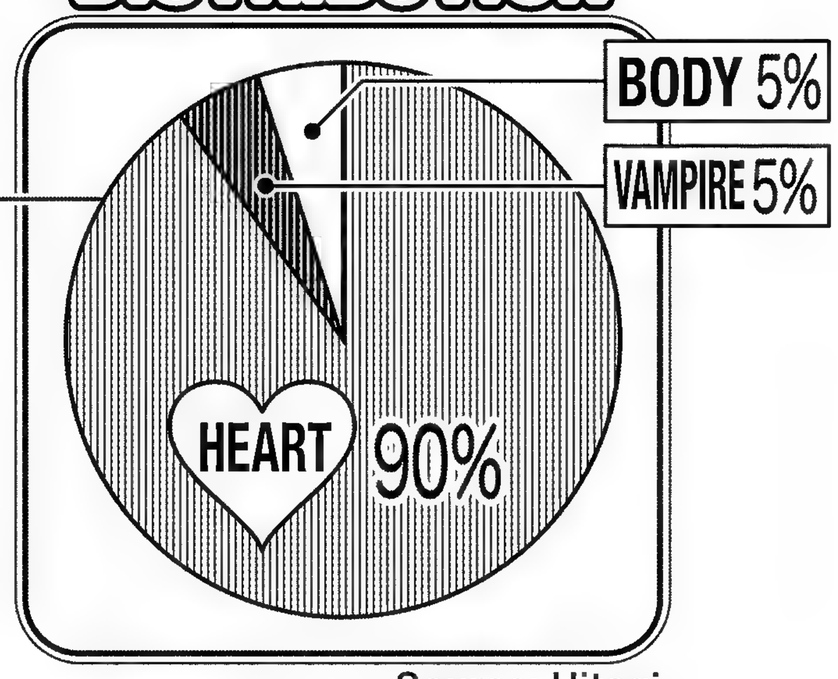
I'll save those for our date.

It was as if...

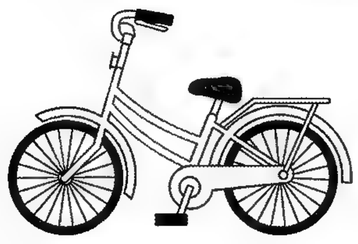
...those words were a kind of destiny prepared for me and me alone.



KOYOMI ARARAGI DISTRIBUTION



Source: Hitagi



EXIT

Coca-Cola

Er...

Well...

All that said—what's going on, Araragi?

Is there some connection between you suddenly bringing up this subject and why Miss Hanekawa left early?

It's fine—you don't have to answer.

Either way, I can't help you.

Miss Hanekawa entrusted me with this.

Yes—she was right. I knew just how hard Hanekawa had worked.

Just how much of herself she'd sacrificed for the sake of the cultural festival.

How could I possibly sneak away?

The more danger Miss Hanekawa is in, the more I'm needed here to fulfill my role.

Those—were powerful words.

...

Okay.

Though it had only been a few hours—Senjogahara had now done the same work as Hanekawa, so she'd be the only person who could understand.

And on top of that,

she barely let a whiff of that out to the rest of the class.

And I'll do what I always do.

I'll call you again later.

Yes—I'd like that.

Let's make this a good cultural festival.

...what you always do.

You just need to do...

As vice-president, I'll leave what's happening at school to you.

You're right.

Hm ?

Your tsun-dere *bonus.*

Just one more thing, Araragi?

Wait.

DON'T MISUNDER-STAND. IT'S NOT LIKE I'M WORRIED ABOUT YOU OR ANYTHING.

BUT ...

...I'LL NEVER FORGIVE YOU IF YOU DON'T COME BACK, OKAY?

Hitagi Senjogahara
Call has ended

BLIP

...

ドン!!

SHUNK

ピッ

KER-KRASH

ガシャン

Ahh.

She's more tundra than tsundere, but...

Ah—

Really.

Every time— seriously.

Every word we exchange ...

...makes me love her more.

Like snow piling up...

...my love for her keeps on growing endlessly.

I will...

...if you're waiting for me like this.

Don't worry—I'll make it back.

...

Please.

...

Please bring Araragi...

...back to me safe and sound— please.

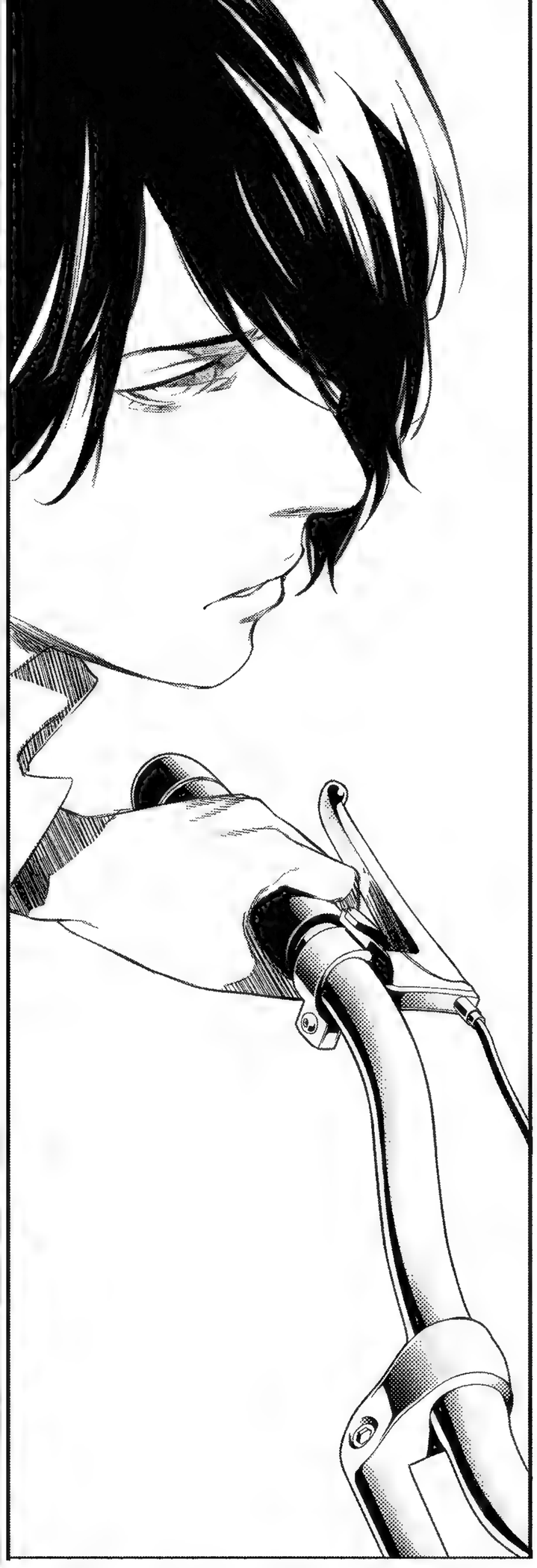
Please— please.

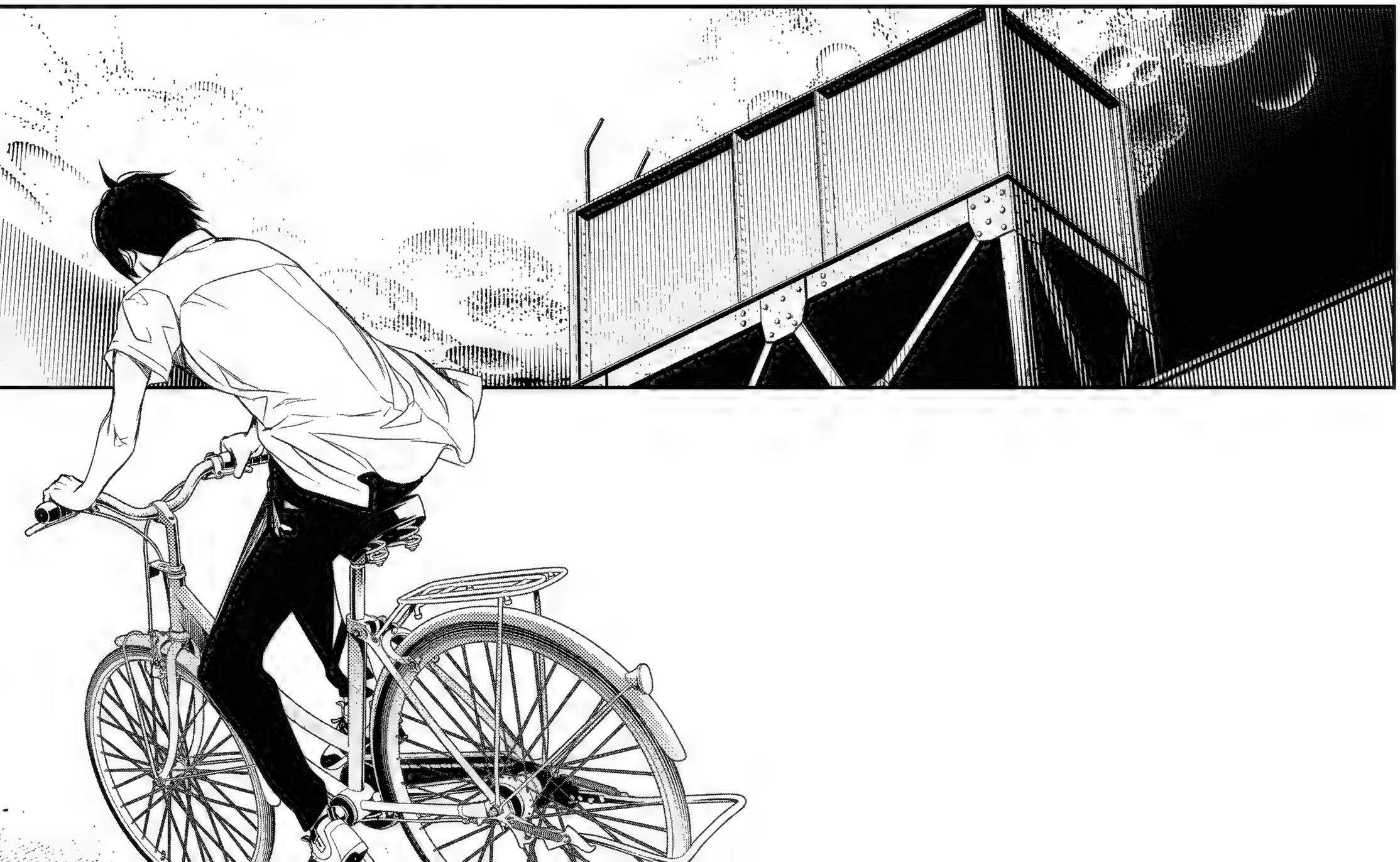
Be safe.

...?!

SHUDDER

Coca-Cola
NO DUMPING
Please don't throw your trash here.





MISTER ARARAGI!!!

?!!

Hachi-kuji?!

SGREEEE

I was looking for you, Mitser Araragi!

I'm so glad to see you!

...I'm glad to see you, too.

But now you're just misspelling my title.

There was something important I forgot to tell you earlier.

So? What is it? What's got you so worked up?

I'm sorry.

Slip of the tongue.

...

Is that so... Well, I've also seen one before.

I'm looking at one right now.

You may find it hard to believe— but I saw a ghost!

...

...“ghost”

...

This...

I don't think normal people can see him.

He was out in the middle of the day, after all.

But I've never felt that afraid before.

I've spent a reasonably long time as an aberration myself.

A GHOOOST!

NOOOO

So ghosts really *do* exist...!

What about this ghost?

Does it have something to do with me?

I'm not sure if it has anything to do with you, Mister Araragi. But...

SQUIRM

ウズ

ウズ

SQUIRM

I'm a disgrace to my name for getting this many softballs and not knocking these jokes out of the park—but...

...this is no time for me to be engaging in some fun banter...

...And?

SZZ
SZZ
SZZ

GROOOAR

KRAKL

KRAKL

KRAKL

Then re-generated—and burned again.

...the ghost...

...burned in the sunlight.

All while staring at Shinobu—she said.

...I don't know if it's relevant here, but...

The ghost disappeared not long after.

Perhaps Miss Shinobu couldn't see him either—she didn't show any signs of concern.

...

...something about him— looked lonely.

Almost like a lost child.

I'LL DO EVERY-THING IN MY POWER TO LOOK FOR MISS SHINOBU!

UNDER-STOOD!

So...

Why were you in such a hurry, Mister Araragi?

Oh, right.

I wanted you to help me with some-thing...

THE PYRAMIDS ?!

ISN'T THAT A LITTLE BIG?

FWOOM

FINDING A LOST CHILD REQUIRES BOTH CLOSE ATTENTION AND NUMBERS!

DOING IT SANS PEERS OR KIDS WOULD BE LIKE TRYING TO BUILD THE PYRAMIDS IN ONE DAY!

I'll contact you via pay phone if I find her.

I AGREE, BUT YOU MEAN THAT TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE!

Though I admit that time is obsolescence.

We must stay calm here.

SO THAT'S WHEN YOUR BRAIN STOPPED GROWING?!

I'M EVEN AWARE OF THE FACT THAT DIGITAL BROAD-CASTING WILL BE STARTING AS OF 2011!

OF COURSE I DO! I'M VERY GOOD WITH MECHAN-ICAL DEVICES!

You know how to use a pay phone?

Wait...

That's not what I mean—I mean, how does a ghost...

A pager is something you use to keep your place in a book, right?

SHE'S AN IDIOT!

HEH HEH

BUT IN THIS DAY AND AGE, I'M NOT EVEN SURE WHAT A PAGER IS! THE WORD'S LOST ALL MEANING FOR ME!

—AND THAT WOULD'VE BEEN THE ORIGINAL PUNCHLINE WRITTEN IN THE ALIGHTS!

Continued in Volume 18

Having gotten everyone's help...
...Koyomi continues his search for Shinobu.
But before he can reach her, he encounters the cat once more.
BAKEMONOGATARI 18
GRIN
Next Volume Preview
When all is settled...
..."Monster time" begins...?
Tsubasa Family confesses.
COMING MAY 2023!

BAKEMONOGATARI (manga) 17

Kodansha Digital Edition

BAKEMONOGATARI volume 17 copyright © 2022 NISIOISIN, Oh!great
English translation copyright © 2023 NISIOISIN, Oh!great

All rights reserved.

First published in Japan in 2022 by Kodansha Ltd., Tokyo.
Electronic publishing rights for this English edition arranged through Kodansha Ltd., Tokyo.

No portion of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means without written permission from the copyright holders.

English digital edition published by Kodansha USA Publishing, LLC, New York.

ISBN: 9781684919086

Digital Edition: 1.0.0

Editing: Ajani Oloye
Translation: Ko Ransom
Production: Grace Lu
Pei Ann Yeap
Hiroko Mizuno
Ripping: 1r0n

kodansha.us